

Navy to select improved lab method for Strontium-90 to increase precision, confidence in retesting data

The Navy continues to make progress on the radiological retesting work at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard (HPNS).

On Parcel G and throughout HPNS, the Navy continues to be methodical and detailed in cleanup and retesting to ensure there is no contamination left behind that would risk public health. Federal and state regulatory agencies are providing input and the Navy closely follows the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), which details how cleanup decisions are made by federal agencies.

With some radionuclides of concern like strontium-90, the Navy must measure extremely low levels of chemicals that are within regional “background” levels. Background levels are a baseline that indicates the general radioactivity in soil that is not due to Navy activities. The background levels for HPNS soil were established in July 2020 after agreement with regulatory agencies. *More information on this can be found in the* [[HYPERLINK](https://www.bracpmo.navy.mil/content/dam/bracpmo/california/former_naval_shipyard_hunters_point/pdfs/all_documents/environmental_documents/basewide/HPNS_20200706_BackgroundExplained_Factsheet.pdf)

["https://www.bracpmo.navy.mil/content/dam/bracpmo/california/former_naval_shipyard_hunters_point/pdfs/all_documents/environmental_documents/basewide/HPNS_20200706_BackgroundExplained_Factsheet.pdf"](https://www.bracpmo.navy.mil/content/dam/bracpmo/california/former_naval_shipyard_hunters_point/pdfs/all_documents/environmental_documents/basewide/HPNS_20200706_BackgroundExplained_Factsheet.pdf)] *titled “Background Levels Explained.”*

The Navy understands that radionuclides can impact public health – so precision is required – and laboratory testing methods need the ability to measure even tiny/fractional levels of strontium-90.

Both the Navy work plan for the Parcel G retesting work and the Environmental Protection Agency’s laboratory testing method for strontium-90 allows for adjustment of the method, depending on project requirements and the levels under evaluation. Navy chemists have worked with the laboratory to refine the testing method for strontium-90 analysis to provide greater certainty in the lab results. Initial lab results were not precise enough to properly test for strontium-90 at HPNS and are therefore not sufficient to address project requirements. None of the preliminary strontium-90 sample results to date are a risk to human health or the environment.

To address project requirements, the Navy will reanalyze all of the strontium-90 soil samples collected to date using the updated procedure and evaluate the results in accordance with the Parcel G retesting work plan.

The Navy’s Base Realignment and Closure Project Management Office is committed to cleaning up Navy impacts to the environment transparently. The Navy will continue to provide the community updates on the Parcel G retesting work.

If you have any questions, please contact the Navy's Environmental Coordinator, Derek Robinson ([[HYPERLINK "mailto:derek.j.robinson1@navy.mil"](mailto:derek.j.robinson1@navy.mil)]).